

Waiver of \$500,000 Single Conference Limitation
Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-12-12
Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations

As Chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I hereby waive the \$500,000 limitation on conference expenses prescribed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-12-12, "Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations," dated May 11, 2012, with respect to the NRC's annual Regulatory Information Conference (RIC), which is anticipated to be held in March 2014. For the reasons detailed below, I have determined that exceptional circumstances exist whereby spending in excess of \$500,000 on hosting the 2014 RIC is the most cost-effective option to achieve a compelling purpose.

The NRC's mission is to "license and regulate the Nation's civilian use of byproduct, source, and special nuclear materials to ensure adequate protection of public health and safety, promote the common defense and security, and protect the environment." To support this mission and the NRC's commitment to conduct its work openly and transparently, the RIC provides a unique forum that brings together diverse groups of stakeholders to inform them of significant policy decisions and regulatory oversight activities. Additionally, the RIC offers an environment in which NRC staff and stakeholders share relevant information, exchange views and perspectives, and raise concerns about the important safety, security, and policy issues before the agency. As we continue to learn from recent events and natural disasters, this forum is crucial to the mission of the agency.

Since its inception in 1987, the RIC has grown to become one of the premier nuclear conferences of its kind in the world. It is widely attended, bringing together approximately 3,000 participants from nearly 30 countries. Participants include members of the public, Federal, State, and local government officials; nuclear safety regulators from other nations; experts from the national laboratories; advocacy groups; media representatives; licensees; vendors; and other interested stakeholders. The technical program features nuclear experts from across the agency, as well as external speakers from industry, academia, public interest groups, and the international community. This educational conference also provides an exceptional opportunity for attendees to hear firsthand the views of each member of the Commission related to emerging regulatory issues and policy matters affecting the agency and the stakeholders.

The face-to-face interaction with members of industry, private interest groups, and other stakeholders is vital and provides a breadth of opportunity to network, share ideas, search for solutions, and establish relationships with colleagues from around the world. The RIC is highly valued by both the agency and the stakeholders for its technical and educational content, and its continuation is strongly supported by industry as reflected in Nuclear Energy Institute's letter to the NRC dated June 1, 2012 (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System Accession No. ML12153A358).

To successfully execute a conference with the magnitude of the RIC requires meticulous coordination and effective management of resources. As part of our fiscal stewardship, every aspect of the planning, logistics, and implementation is carefully scrutinized and monitored to ensure all monies are spent in the most cost effective and efficient manner. Typically, the RIC

contract expenses are approximately \$700,000 each year which includes the conference facility, registration, audio visual, and onsite logistical support. The NRC also uses in-house resources to support the planning and logistics aspects of the conference. These support areas include: technical program development, Web support, design and production of conference materials, pre-registration, and onsite staffing.

To obtain the best value for the Government, the NRC will hold a full and open competition for the RIC 2014 conference location. The statement of work requires that the location be near the NRC and within walking distance of the Metro line in order to greatly reduce travel and per diem costs for most Federal conference attendees. Additionally, the geographic location requirements identified in the statement of work greatly reduces travel costs for planners during the conference preparation phase. Being located near the NRC on the Metro line also enables NRC staff to attend only the conference portions that are valuable to them and to return to their workplaces for the remainder of each day.

Furthermore, a location near the NRC on the Metro line allows the NRC to use its own headquarters facility for some of the needed additional meeting space and enables NRC staff and our international counterparts to take that opportunity to conduct non-conference business that would otherwise necessitate international travel, further reducing annual travel costs to the NRC.

Approved

Not Approve

 /RA/
Chairman Macfarlane

 06/12/2013
Date